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ABSTRACT

Educators suggest that children whose families have read to them during their preschool years acquire lexical and syntactic knowledge of sentence-level features typical of written narrative before they begin formal literacy instruction. To test this claim, to discern growth in this knowledge over time and experience, and to describe the lexical and syntactic expectations held by these children, a study compared oral and "written" narratives produced orally by well-read-to children. Twenty kindergarten and 20 second graders first told the researcher about their birthday parties (oral narrative), and then pretended to read a story to a doll from a wordless book (written narrative). The two narrative registers were compared within subjects for significant differences along 16 dimensions representing lexical and syntactic features known to differentiate oral and written narrative (e.g. number of participles, attributive adjectives, literary words and phrases, direct quotes, and formulaic openings). The analysis revealed that children well-read-to prior to formal literacy instruction had abstracted identifiable lexical and syntactic expectations of written narrative. Specifically they expect the language of written narrative to be (1) integrated, (2) involving, (3) literary, and (4) decontextualized. No significant differences between the grades were found, contradicting the hypothesis that second graders' expectations of written narrative would reflect the effects of learning to read. (Interview transcripts, a bibliography, a description of methodology, and tables of results on lexical and syntactic features analysis are included.) (Author/JG)

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Lexical and Syntactic Knowledge of Written Narrative Held by Well-Read-To Kindergartners and Second Graders

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Running Head: Lexical and Syntactic Knowledge

LEXICAL AND SYNTACTIC KNOWLEDGE OF WRITTEN NARRATIVE HELD BY WELL-READ-TO KINDERGARTNERS AND SECOND GRADERS

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the claim that well-read-to children begin formal instruction in reading and writing with a linguistic knowledge of the lexical and syntactic features typical of written narrative. The goal was to identify this written-narrative register in the oral language of preliterate children and to describe it. The written-narrative registers of literate second graders was also examined to ascertain growth in knowledge of lexical and syntactic features of written narrative. Twenty kindergarten and 20 second graders (a) told the researcher about their birthday parties (oral narrative) and (b) pretended to read a story to a doll from a wordless book (written narrative). The two narrative registers were compared within subject for significant differences along 16 dimensions representing lexical and syntactic features found to differentiate oral and written narrative in previous research. The analysis revealed that children who have been read to prior to formal literacy instruction have abstracted identifiable lexical and syntactic expectations of written narrative. Specifically they expect the language of written narrative to be (a) integrated, (b) involving, (c) literary, and (d) decontextualized. No significant differences between the grades were found.

Reading to young, preschool children is a commonly advocated practice in this society. Educators often point to the high correlations between being read to as a young child and success at learning to read in school. The question for educational researchers becomes, "What do children gain from this exposure to books which would explain the facilitation of the learning-to-read process?"

Some have suggested that children who have been read to learn to associate reading with positive affect, viewing reading as a positive and rewarding activity (Mathewson, 1976; Ruddell, 1985). However, a cognitive benefit of being read to is also likely. Learning to read involves learning to process written language effectively (with comprehension) and efficiently (quickly and accurately). Several educators and researchers suggest that well-read-to children implicitly learn a "book language." That is, these children become familiar with lexical choices and linguistic structures which tend to be specific to written language (Butler & Clay, 1979; Genishi & Dyson, 1984; Holdaway, 1979). A processing benefit is suggested by Leu (1982) who found that children who demonstrated familiarity with written structures had fewer word recognition and comprehension errors than those who did not, suggesting that familiarity with lexical and syntactic choices common to written language provides a further, cognitive benefit of being read to during the

preschool years.

One purpose of this study was to test the suggestion that children who have been read to during their preschool years, possess lexical and syntactic knowledge of sentence-level features typical of written narrative before they begin formal literacy instruction. A further purpose of this study was to provide a featural description of the lexical and syntactic knowledge of written narrative held by well-read-to children. The effects of maturation and learning on the development of written-language knowledge was also examined by comparing second-grade readers' responses to the research tasks to kindergartners'.

Within the context of this study, I interchangeably use the terms expectations and knowledge of written narrative. I do this because of the implication for readers of the possession of written narrative linguistic knowledge. The syntactic and lexical knowledge hypothesized to be held by well-read-to children is of little help if it is not activated by the context of a reading task so that it can aid readers in predicting as they process print. The term expectations semantically captures this predictive value of linguistic knowledge of written-narrative language.

This study approached the problem of describing young children's linguistic knowledge of written narrative by comparing, within subject, oral and written narratives produced orally by the children. These two context-cued narrative modes

were termed registers, acknowledging the effects of context on syntax and lexicon (Destefano, 1978). Lexical and syntactic features appearing significantly more or less often, as predicted by theory and research (Chafe, 1982; Gates, 1984; Tannen, 1982) in the written-narrative registers were assumed to be linguistic indicators of written-narrative knowledge held by the children.

Review of Related Research

Three strands of research inform this study: (1) research on the facilitative effect of congruous expectations on word recognition; (2) research on literacy development in young children; and (3) research into oral/written language differences.

Expectations and Word Recognition. This study sought to identify well-read-to children's syntactic and lexical expectations of written narrative. Specifying the written-narrative linguistic expectations of children before and as they learn to read is a focus of theorists and practitioners because of the key role expectations play in the processing of print. The research into the effect of expectations (often referred to as "context effects") on perception/recognition provides overwhelming evidence that expectations result in faster and more accurate recognition of objects, including letters and words, if those expectations are congruous with the observed data (Becker & Killion, 1977; Biederman, Glass & Stacy, 1973; McClelland &

Rumelhart, 1981, 1982; Meyer, Schvaneveldt & Ruddy, 1979; Stanovich & West, 1978, 1979, 1981; Wheeler, 1970). This facilitative effect of congruous expectations on language processing holds for both syntactic expectations as well as semantic/lexical expectations (Garrett, Bever, & Fodor, 1966; Jarvella, 1971; Levelt, 1970). The facilitative effect of language expectations on word recognition has been shown for beginning readers as well as more proficient readers (Biemiller, 1970; Clay, 1967; Goodman, 1967; McKinnon, 1959; Pearson & Studt, 1975; Stanovich, West, & Feeman, 1981; Schvaneveldt, Ackerman & Semlear, 1977; Schwantes, Boesl, & Ritz, 1980).

Further, evidence exists (Caplan, 1972; Neisser, 1976) suggesting that the facilitative effect of perceptual schemata on recognition is intermodal. Caplan (1972) demonstrated that listening to sentences of two clauses facilitated perceptual recognition of words from one of the clauses. This adds further relevance to the study of aurally-acquired expectations of written-narrative language held by children before and during learning to read.

Literacy Development in Young Children. Research into emergent literacy in children from infancy to the start of formal instruction has documented that children raised in literate cultures learn about written language on several levels before they encounter direct teaching about it (Purcell-Gates, 1986). The present study is motivated by the claim that children who are

read to a great deal in the years prior to formal instruction acquire a knowledge of the lexical and syntactic systems of written language (Clay, 1979; Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1981; Holdaway, 1979). Holdaway claims that children with a background of book experience since infancy "...have developed native language control of the fundamental forms of written dialect (p. 49)."

Although most observers of young children may recognize it immediately when children "talk like a book," no one has described linguistically this language register for children of this age or the ways in which this talk differs from "nonbook" talk. Clay's and Holdaway's "book language" remains an impressionistic term and needs to be defined more precisely.

That children seem to acquire information about the language of written narrative over the years of being read to is suggested by Sulzby's (1983) study of repeated-reading attempts of favorite storybooks by two- to five-year-old children. Sulzby found developmental patterns which showed a move from language which is highly "oral" in nature to language which is more "written." For measure of oral/written language she used (a) intonation, (b) Chafe's (1982) list of syntax features and phrases which distinguish written from oral language, and (c) contextualized/decontextualized (can be understood without reference to the pictures) language. She found that, as children progressed to using language more typical of written, they made fewer linguistic references to items outside of the text. In

other words, they used fewer exophoric deictic references and more endophoric references.

While Sulzby limited the results of her study to favorite storybooks, the implication was that the children were learning about the nature of written language and not just parroting memorized text. It seems reasonable that Sulzby's categories of emergent reading trace the course of development of written-language knowledge in preliterate children, the end result of which is attested to by Clay, (1979), Harste et al (1981), and Holdaway (1979). This, however, implies an abstraction of knowledge which can be generalized to new situations such as processing novel text during the learning-to-read process. The present study tested this implication.

Oral/Written Language Differences. Research into oral/written language differences has made it possible to specify lexical and syntactic features which are more specific to written narrative. This research concludes that written language is more autonomous or decontextualized than oral language due to its monologic, non-interactive nature and independence from paralinguistic cues (Chafe, 1982; Olson, 1977; Rubin, 1978; Tannen, 1982).

Chafe has detailed specific oral/written featural differences based on samples from university faculty and graduate students. He found that oral and written language differ along the dimensions of (a) fragmentation/integration and (b)

involvement/detachment (Chafe, 1982).

Greater intonation in written language is the result of the increased amount of time available to a writer, the edititability of writing, and probably also the increased speed with which a reader can scan a piece of writing (Chafe, in press). Written language is integrated through use of the following devices for incorporating additional elements into the idea unit:

(a) nominalizations (e.g. treatment rather than treat)

(b) participles (e.g. patients suffering from)

(c) conjoined phrases (e.g. The traders are greedy and gullible)

(d) series (e.g. No capital letters, definite articles, or plural markers provide clues.)

(e) attributive adjectives (e.g. old house rather than the house was old)

(f) sequences of prepositional phrases (e.g. I avoid the question of the nature of referential forms in any underlying linguistic structure.)

(g) complement clauses (e.g. He thought that he was sick.)

(h) relative clauses (e.g. and of the cognitive constraints which seem to be responsible for this distribution.)

The fact that speakers are usually face to face with their listeners while writers are separated from their readers results in the increased involvement in oral language, according to Chafe. This involvement was evidenced in Chafe's data by the

following:

(a) first-person references (e.g. I was reading...)

(b) references to speaker's mental processes (e.g. I thought...)

(c) monitoring of information flow (e.g. you know ...)

(d) emphatic particles (e.g. just, really)

(e) vagueness and hedges (e.g. sort of, something like, and so on)

(f) direct quotes (e.g. and I said, "No, I'm afraid I don't.")

Chafe (1982) also found that written language employs a richer, more varied, vocabulary than does oral language and that the level of the vocabulary in written language was different, characterized by more literary terms (e.g. despite, ascertain, optimal) which sound out of place in speaking. He attributes this to the fact that spoken language is the locus of ongoing language change, whereas written language preserves a more conservative vocabulary and grammar (in press).

Researchers and theorists who claim that written language is autonomous and detached are usually contrasting oral conversational style with essayist style. However, as Rader (1982) and Tannen (1982) point out, oral/literate differences shift according to mode of discourse, and written narrative features differ from written expository features.

Tannen (1982) found that written narrative, while showing many features of increased syntactic complexity found in written

exposition, also contains more rather than fewer features of what Chafe (1982) termed "involvement," e.g. details, imageability, direct quotes, repetition of sounds, words, and phrases. Tannen concluded that this is because creative writing is a genre which in addition to being written also "depends for its effect on interpersonal involvement or the sense of identification between the writer or the characters and the reader" (p. 14).

Rader (1982) claims that the use of such features as details and imageability is due to the fact that the job of a writer of narrative is to enable the reader to form the right image. She argues that written-narrative language is used to provide a text context -- "the creation of a world" -- and the success of this language is highly dependent on the contribution of background information by the reader.

Novelists, like essayists, also use precise, complex, and explicit language, according to Rader (1982). They do this, though, not to signal logical relationships, but to constrain the imaging of the reader. "Novelists work for explicit images, vivid details, well-chosen words whose connotations deepen and enrich their choice" (p. 195). This communicative purpose -- to create a world through the language of the text -- may be realized through the use of language features which are not utilized in oral narratives where speaker and listener can interact and much information can be conveyed through gesture, expression, vocal tone, and shared context.

The preceding discussion suggests that children who have been

read to in their preschool years may have abstracted linguistic expectations specific to written narrative. If so, these expectations would facilitate processing of written language as they learn to read. Research has specified some of the lexical and syntactic features which differentiate oral and written language, and these features were used to test for the possession of a written-narrative register by the children in this study.

The specific research questions asked were

1. Will the children within grade-level sample use greater frequencies of sentence-level language features typical of written narrative when asked to "read" to a doll and "make it sound like a book" than when asked to "tell" about the event?

A positive answer to Research Question #1 was taken as evidence that these children did have lexical and syntactic expectations of written narrative which differ from their expectations for oral narrative.

2. Which lexical and syntactic features diffentiate the children's written narrative registers from their oral-narrative registers in each grade-level sample?

Although being read to is one form of exposure to written language, it is a relatively passive one. The process of decoding written language as one learns to read involves children more actively with written-language features as proficiency and experience in reading increases. Thus this study also examined the possibility that the expectations of written narrative held

by second graders will reflect the effects of learning to read. If this is true, the second graders should differentiate between their oral and written registers to a greater degree than the kindergartners.

The specific research question asked was

3. Do second graders differentiate between their oral and written registers to a greater degree on any of the features as compared to the kindergartners?

Method

Subjects

Twenty (10 boys and 10 girls) kindergarten and 20 second-grade children (10 boys and 10 girls) were randomly selected for the study from a pool of qualified subjects. On the basis of responses to a questionnaire, children meeting the following criteria were considered eligible for the sample: (a) child had been read to at least five times per week for the two years preceding the start of kindergarten; (b) English was the child's first language; (c) the kindergarten children were not yet reading independently, defined operationally as not having yet read an entire unfamiliar text of connected discourse with minimal help, as attested to by parents and teachers; (d) the second-grade children were reading at grade level or above as ascertained by teacher judgment and by standardized tests taken at the end of first grade.

The 40 students in the sample came from the three elementary

schools in a midsized school district in a large urban area in northern California. The children were representative of the population of the district which is characterized as racially-mixed, though predominately white, middle- to lower-middle class. The children in both samples came from a wide variety of homes and backgrounds, ranging from single parent to grandparent-dominated. Parental education ranged from Ph.D.'s to eighth-grade dropouts. The one factor shared by all was the experience of being read to extensively prior to starting kindergarten.

Materials

The following materials were used in the study:

(1) Questionnaire: A questionnaire including a cover letter explaining the study and a permission slip was sent home with each child soliciting information qualifying the child for the study and SES information for sample description. Information solicited in the questionnaire included: (a) child's age, (b) parent employment and education, (c) sibling' age and sex, (d) child's ability to read independently, (e) history of at-home reading to child, (f) library habits of child, (g) nature of special occasion in recent experience of child, (h) child's favorite books, (e) child's engagement in "repeated-reading" activity, (j) child's behavior while being read to, and (d) whether English is child's first language..

(2) Wordless picture book: A wordless picture book, Creepy Castle, by John S. Goodall was used by the children when they pretended to read a story. The book has 30 pages, and each page

has a new picture which advances the story line.

(3) Dolls: Two dolls, representing a male and a female, were provided to the children from which they picked one to "read" to for the written-language task. Each doll was small enough to be held in the children's laps.

Procedures

Three hundred questionnaires with prestamped return envelopes were sent home with all kindergarten and second-grade students in the school district with a return rate of 48 percent. Those questionnaires for children who met the criteria discussed under "Subjects" were pooled by grade, and the sample students were randomly selected from this pool of 65 kindergartners and 52 second graders.

For one week prior to data collection at each school, I visited the classrooms containing children in the samples for an average of two days each where I observed and participated in class activities as opportunities arose. This allowed the children to become familiar and comfortable with me.

Following this familiarization period, data collection began. The children met individually with the researcher in a private room at each school where they were greeted and told briefly about the study. They were told that they could choose a "thank you" toy from a prize bag when they were finished. They were also shown the audio recorder and allowed to turn it off and on and to record and listen to their names.

The following tasks were then presented to each child at

both grade levels, the order of presentation counterbalanced across subjects and sexes.

(a) Oral Register: The children were asked to tell me about their most recent birthday party, or another significant event in the recent experience of the child if the child's family did not celebrate birthdays (ascertained from the questionnaires) or if the child could not remember the party. The instructions designed to elicit an oral narrative account were

> I want you to tell me about your last birthday party (or other event). Tell me all about it. Tell me what you did, who all was there, what people said, the decorations, the games (if any), the presents -- everything. Tell me so that I can picture it in my mind.

I was careful to avoid the word "story" to ensure that oral-, not written-language, structures were cued. All but 2 of the 40 children told about their birthday parties.

(b) Written Register: The children were asked to recall times when their parents read to them. I then gave the following instructions:

> Pretend that you are a mommy/daddy and this (the chosen doll) is your little boy/girl. He/she is about 5 years-old, and you are going to read a story to him/her which I will give you. He/she wants to listen to the story. You can hold your little boy/girl on your lap, or he/she can sit beside you, or you can pretend that he/she is in bed. Be sure you make the story sound

like a book story.

The dolls were provided and the task structured in this way to provide a more realistic audience for the child than is typically provided in studies where the audience is either unknown or, by default, the researcher. The task was also an attempt to provide a familiar context -- a parent reading to a child -- for the tapping of language structures in memory.

The children were first shown the wordless book, Creepy Castle, and allowed to look through it, from beginning to end, in order to discover the general story. They were asked to peruse the book silently and to not talk out loud about the story. Pilot study experience suggested that if the children orally encoded language about the story as they looked through it for the first time, they tended to perseverate on that language when they pretended to read, resulting in an introduction of a more oral register into a potential written register, confounding the task. The children could pose any questions they wished. I pointed out to the children that the book had no words so they could not really read it even if that were possible. This was done to assure the kindergarten children that they were not being asked to perform a difficult or impossible task, thus freeing them to call upon their knowledge of the appropriate language for a game of "pretend." The title of the book was read to the children. Before each child began, I reminded them to "be sure and make it sound like a book story." This was emphasized to help elicit written-type structures and vocabulary.

Both the oral narrative and the written-register narrative were audiotaped for later analysis. For illustration, Laura's (kindergarten) responses to these tasks follows:

Oral Register:

Child	Researcher
well .. I had ten guests .... I don't remember all who they were .. but I remember one was Ola .. one was Sara and Kathy 'cause they are sisters	
	mm mm
... older brother .. and .. he also came .. he wass tall ... and of course I had to invite my brother	
	(laugh)
... 'cause of course he was .. right there in the house	
	mm mm
...a-n-d .. let's see ... Ola ... and /yorika/ brother ... and that's all I can remember ... of the guests .... and ... we had it at my .. house ..... and ... the kids were saying things like ... I want to blow bubbles ..... and .. I want to swing .... and we had face paints .. and the kids	

were coming outside to get their faces painted

ohhh

but .. I got a .. rainbow heart

oh

... and so did my .. friend ....
my .. best friend at the party
... my friend /Kee/ (sniff) who's actually ... the same birthday

uh huh

and then I know another person
... with a June first birthday
.. but he's a boy ....
and his name is Brandon .... so
and he's oh
just down the street ....

was he at your party?

uh uh (no)

oh ..... what else did you do at your party? Had your faces painted .... what else?

.... and then after my party
.... we had like a little ...

family party ... and .. we went
to ... (tsk) the .... um ... San
Francisco Zoo ... 'cause I got to
choose where to go .... and I said
San Francisco Zoo

mm mm

tell me about that
trip

... well .. my grandma was there

uh huh

... gramma flew all the way from
South Dakota

ohhh

... except for then she lived ....
a-actually ... Aberdeen South
Dakota but .. sh .. then she
lived on the coast .... except for
now she lives .. back back back
.... and we even drove to her house

now tell me about the
zoo trip .... your
gramma was there?

mm mm (yes)

tell me about
going to the zoo

... and we dro:ve down .... and, ...
we waw the lio:ns .. and the tigers ...

uh huh

... and I think the mon-keys ...

uh huh

... and the snow leopard

oh

.... and that's all I can remember
of .... of .. my last ... birthday

well that's a
lot .... you had a
big special birthday
... didn't you?

... and of course we ate .. cake
and ice cream .. but this one's
going to be at a park (sniff) and
we're only going to eat .. ca:ke

Written Register:

There once .... was a brave knight ... and a beautiful lady ..... they went ... on a trip ..... a dangerous trip ..... they saw a little castle .. in the distance .... they went to it .... a mean ... mea:n ... mea:n ... hunter .. was following them ... through the bushes ... at the entrance .. of the little castle ..... as he cree:ped out of the bushes ... he thought what to do ..... as the drawbridge was opened ... they could easily get in ..... and the question was .... how to trick them .... so ... he waited

.... (ts) . they started to go up .... the path ... of the drawbridge ..... he slowly and quietly followed them ..... still not knowing what he was going to do ..... he had tricked them ... into go- ... right into a trap .... they went ... carefully ... through the trap .... with him .. always close behind ... (sneeze, cough) .... as he went he .. knew what he was going to do .... but not as much as he wanted ... he quickly ..... he ... knew how to work the /?/ keys ... as so did the /stubborn/ knight .... that was his o:nly problem ..... he took .. the key out ... and snuck away ... without /????/ .... /???/ .... and they were locked in to the room .... behind them were dark dark eyes ..... this .. is what they saw ..... eyes in the darkness ... eyes in the scoop ..... the young lady was afraid to go any farther ..... but the young knight ..... tried to drag her away .... /???/ .... bats ... is what they were .... bats .... spooky baby bats ..... the knight ... laughed ... /?/ and laughed more ..... they went up another stairway ... and another spook .. hit the ground ... a big .. blue .. ragged .. monster ... coming out .. and out ..... it came all the way out .... and then with his stick ... he finally got it /?/ ..... they saw a light .... they stuffed .. the bag .. out the window ... he stuffed the bag out the window .... and ... pushed her out .... she fell .. kersplash .... into the pond .... a nice frog was rowing ... a lilypad .... he let her on ..... then ... as he saw ... that .... he was also coming aboard /?/ .... he let him on ..... as the two men rowed .... the dripping lady was in between .....

they got safely to shore ..... and .. a:s that little ghoul was sneaking .... toward ... the lake ..... they dumped him in .... as well .... kersplash ..... that was the end of him .... and they lived happily .. ever .. after

Design

This study utilized a within-subject repeated-measures design with two conditions within subjects -- (a) oral - and (b) written-narrative registers -- and two conditions between subjects -- grades (a) K and (b) 2. A within-subject design was necessary because of the high correlation between complexity of oral-language development and written-language development (Chomsky, 1972; Loban, 1963). Since written register was being compared to oral register for signs of increased use of certain features, many of which result in increased complexity, only a difference score within subject would be meaningful in ascertaining that individual children have learned a separate language register.

Data Preparation

Each subject's language samples -- both oral and written register -- were transcribed according to conventions established by Chafe (1980) and Tannen (1984). Intonation units (Chafe, 1982) were marked and retyped in numbered order onto a second transcript for analysis. Intonation units are linguistic units marked by (a) pause length and/or (b) intonation curve of either a final fall-rise (marked on transcripts with a comma) or

sentence-final fall (marked on transcripts with a period). Reliability of intonation unit selection, assessed by having a trained graduate student mark intonation units for six randomly selected kindergarten transcripts and six randomly selected second grade transcripts, was r = .99. The intonation units for Laura's transcripts follow:

Oral:

Child	Researcher
1. Well .. I had ten guests,	
2. .... I don't remember all who they were,	
3. .. but I remember one was Ola,	
4. .. one was Sara and Kathy,	
5. 'cause they are sisters.	
	mm mm
6. ... older brother,	
7. .. and .. he also came,	
8. .. he was tall,	
9. ... and of course I had to invite my brother,	
	laugh
10. ... 'cause of course he was .. right there in the house.	
	mm mm
11. ... a-n-d .. lets see,	
12. ... Ola,	

13. ... and /yorika/ brother,
14. ... and that all I can remember,
15. ... of the guests.
16. .... and,
17. ... we had it at my .. house,
18. ..... and,
19. ... the kids were saying things like,
20. ... "I want to blow bubbles."
21. ..... and .. "I want to swim."
22. .. and we had face paints,
23. .. and the kids were coming outside
    to get their faces painted,

ohh

24. but,
25. ... I got a .. rainbow heart.

oh

26. ... and so did my friend.
27. .... my .. best friend at the party.
28. ... my friend /Kee/.
29. (sniff) who's actually .. the
    same birthday.

uh huh

30. and then I know another person,
31. ... with a June first birthday,
32. .. but he's a boy.
33. ... and his name is Brandon.

so

34. .... and he's just down the street. ....

oh

was he at your party?

35. uh uh. (no)

oh ..... what else did you do at your party? Had your faces painted ....

36. .... and then after my party,

37. .... we had like a little ... family party,

38. ... and .. we went ... (tsk) the .... um ... San Francisco Zoo.

mmmm

39. ... 'cause I got to choose where to go,

40. .... and I said "San Francisco Zoo."

tell me about that trip

41. ... well,

42. .. my grandma was there,

uh huh

43. ... gramma flew all the way

from South Dakota.

44. .... except for then she lived .... a-actually ... Aberdeen South Dakota,

45. but .. sh .. then she lived on the coast.

46. .... except for now she lives .. back back back.

47. .... and we even drove to her house.

now tell me about the zoo trip .... your gramma was there?

48. mm mm. (yes)

tell me about going to the zoo.

49. ... and we dro:ve down.

50. .... and,

51. ... we saw the lio:ns,

52. .. and the ti:gers,

... uh huh

53. ... and I think the mon-keys,

... uh huh

54. ... and the snow leopard,

oh

55. .... and that's all I can remember

of .... of .. my last ... birthday.

well that's a lot
....you had a big
special birthday..
.. didn't you?

56. ... and of course we ate ..
cake and ice cream.
57. .. but this one's going to be at a park,
58. (sniff) and we're only going to eat .. ca:ke,

Written:

1. there once .... was a brave knight,
2. ... and a beautiful lady.
3. ..... they went ... on a trip.
4. .....a dangerous trip.
5. ..... they saw a little castle.
6. .. in the distance.
7. .... they went to it.
8. .... a mean ... mea:n ... mea:n .. hunter,
9. .. was following them,
10. ... through the bushes.
11. ... at the entrance .. of the little castle.
12. ..... as he cree:ped out of the bushes,
13. ... he thought what to do.
14. ..... as the drawbridge was opened,
15. ... they could easily get in,

16. ..... and the question was .... how to trick them,
17. .... so ... he waited.
18. .... (tsk) . they started to go up,
19. .... the path ... of the drawbridge.
20. ..... he slowly and quietly followed them.
21. ..... still not knowing what he was going to do.
22. ..... he had tricked them.
23. ... into go- ... right into a trap.
24. .... they went carefully ... through the trap.
25. .... with him .. always close behind.
26. .... as he went he .. knew what he was going to do.
27. .... but not as much as he wanted.
28. ... he quickly ..... he ... knew how to work the /?/ keys.
29. ... and so did the stubborn knight.
30. .... that was his o:nly problem.
31. ..... he took .. the key out,
32. ... and snuck away,
33. ... without /????/ .... /???/
34. .... and they were locked in to the room.
35. .... behind them were dark dark eyes.
36. ..... this .. is what they saw.
37. ..... eyes in the darkness,
38. ... eyes in the scoop.
39. ..... the young lady was afraid to go any farther.
40. ..... but the young knight,

41. ..... tried to drag her away.
42. bats ... is what they were,
43. .... bats,
44. .... spooky /baby/ bats.
45. ..... the knight ... laughed.
46. ... /?/ and laughed more.
47. ..... they went up another stairway.
48. ... and another spook .. hit the ground.
49. ... a big .. blue .. ragged .. monster.
50. ... coming out .. and out.
51. ..... it came all the way out,
52. .... and then with his stick,
53. ... he finally got it /?/.
54. ..... they saw a light.
55. .... they stuffed .. the bag .. out the window.
56. .... he stuffed the bag out the window.
57. .... and ... pushed her out.
58. ..... she fell .. kersplash.
59. .... into the pond.
60. .... a nice frog was rowing.
61. .... a lilypad.
62. ..... then ... as he saw ... that .... he was also coming aboard/?/,
64. .... he let him on.
65. ..... as the two men rowed,
66. .... the dripping lady was in between.

67. ..... they got safely to shore.

68. ..... and .. a:s that little ghoul ... was sneaking .... toward ... the lake,

69. .... they dumped him in.

70. .... as well.

71. .... kersplash.

72. ..... that was the end of him.

73. .... and they lived happily .. ever .. after

Several types of intonation units were eliminated at this stage from future analysis and from the final count of intonation units per sample:

(a) units which were immediately repeated for correction purposes.

(b) units which were abandoned before completion.

(c) units which were immediate answers to questions from the researcher.

(d) units containing language provided by the researcher in answer to questions regarding vocabulary.

(e) formulaic endings with no content other than the signal that the story is ended, typically, The End.

Thus, for Laura, units # 35 in the oral and # 55 in the written were eliminated from future analysis.

To answer Research Questions 1 and 2, the intonation units for both oral- and written-narrative register samples were analyzed and marked for the occurrence of 15 lexical and syntactic features chosen from the research of Chafe (1982),

Chafe and Danielewicz (1984), Gates (1984), and Tannen (1982) as potential differentiators of oral- and written-narrative registers. These features (with examples taken from Laura's transcripts) included:

(a) Participles--verbs used syntactically as nouns or adjectives. Terms which have become lexicalized with their meanings frozen were not counted as instances of this feature (see Chafe, 1982), e.g. padding and ice skating. Laura (Written #66): ....the dripping lady was in between.

(b) Attributive Adjectives--states expressed as modifiers rather than assertions (e.g. The brown dog instead of The dog is brown). Laura (Written #1): There once .... was a brave knight,

(c) Conjoined Phrases--conjoined verb, adjective, noun, or adverbial phrases. Conjoined phrases which have become common units were not counted as instances of this feature, e.g. mom and dad and cake and ice cream. Laura (Oral #51 & 52): .. ... we saw the lio:ns, .. and the ti:gers,

(d) Series-- series of nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. Laura (Written #8): ... a mean ... mea:n ... mea:n ... hunter,

(e) Sequences of Prepositional Phrases-- prepositional phrases chained in sequence. Laura (Written #11): ... at the entrance .. of the little castle.

(f) Complement Clauses-- clauses introduced by that (except those where that replaces which or who). Laura (Written

#63): ....then ... as he saw ... that .... he was also coming aboard/?/,

(g) Relative Clauses-- clauses introduced by which and who (and by that if that replaces which or who). Laura (Oral #14): ... and that's all I can remember,

(h) Adverbial Clauses-- the following types of clauses serving an adverbial function: temporal (e.g. before), conditional (e.g. if), causal (e.g. because), concessive (e.g. although), manner (e.g. as), purposive (e.g. so that), resultative (e.g. so), other (e.g. at least). Laura (Written #14): .....as the drawbridge was opened,

(i) -ly Adverbs-- -ly words serving syntactically to modify verbs. The following adverbs were not counted for this feature for this study: finally, usually, really. These have not been found to be reliable differentiators of oral and written language in the same way as -ly adverbs which answer the "how" of an action. Laura (Written #20): .... he slowly and quietly followed them.

(j) Literary Words and Phrases--words and phrases which are typically used in writing and sound out of place in speaking (e.g. He followed after her). Formulaic openings and endings typically used in written narratives were not counted as instances of this feature. Laura (Written #6): .. in the distance.

(k) Literary Word Order--syntax or word order which is more typically used in writing than in oral language (e.g. Hiding

was the dragon). Laura (Written #65 & 66): ....as the two men rowed, ... the dripping lady was in between.

(l) Direct Quotes--the expression of dialogue or monologue with dialogue carriers. Laura (Oral #20): ..."I want to blow bubbles."

(m) Sound Effects--words mean to indicate environmental sounds rather than language (e.g. bang! bang!). Animal sounds which were expressed as dialogue, e.g. The frog said, "ribbet.", were counted as instances of Direct Quotes and not Sound Effects. Laura (Written #58): .... she fell .. kersplash.

(n) Formulaic Opening-- use of Once upon a time ..., Once there were ..., or any combination of these. Once without a there construction was not counted as an instance of this, e.g. Once a prince walked.... Laura (Written #1): There once .... was a brave knight,

(o) Exophoric Reference-- reference to items outside of the text. The usee of the deictic terms this or these as in I had this dog or There were these kids was counted as exophoric for this study. Laura (Oral #57): .. but this one's going to be at a park,

Reliability of feature identification was assessed by having a trained graduate student mark randonly-selected intonation-unit transcripts for six kindergartners and six second graders. The Pearson product moment correlation between the first and second scoring was r = .96.

Analysis

A percentage score for each feature use per language sample was calculated, reflecting the proportion of occurrences for that feature within language sample to the total number of intonation units in the language sample. Thus for each feature analyzed, there resulted two proportional scores per subject -- one for oral and one for written register. For example, Laura's scores for use of Adverbial Clauses were (a) Oral: 3 adverbial clauses out of 57 intonation units for a score of 5 percent and (b) Written: 6 adverbial clauses out of 72 intonation units for a score of 8 percent.

Between-register differences were analyzed with the Matched-Pair Wilcoxin Text, a repeated-measures nonparametric test sensitive to platykurtic distributions, descriptive of the difference scores in this study (Marascuilo & McSweeny, 1977). A nonparametric test was also called for because (a) the scores represented proportions, which do not satisfy the distribution assumptions of parametric tests, and (b) several cells in the data contained no scores.

Each of the 15 tests was run on a planned-comparison basis. Theory and previous research indicate that each of the 15 features, except for Exophoric Reference, would differentiate between the oral and written registers by showing an increase of occurrence in the written registers. It was predicted that the opposite would be true for exophoric reference since the decontextualized nature of written language requires the

referential relationship to be contained within the text.

Between-grade differences were analyzed with the Mann-Whitney U, a two-sample nonparametric test for equal centers. The within-subject difference scores for each feature were tested separately for significant differences between grades.

Again, the prediction was made apriori that the second graders, due to increased, active exposure to written language, would increase their difference scores over those of the kindergartners. In other words, the second graders' written registers would appear more "written" than the kindergartners'.

Following collection of the data, it became apparent that the verbs chosen for the written registers were more varied than for the oral, signaling another difference between the two registers. Type/token ratios were thus calculated for all of the verbs used in each register. These ratios were then compared with the Matched-Pair Wilcoxin Test on a two-tailed basis. The two-Sample Wilcoxin, a nonparametric test with equal probability distribution to the Mann-Whitney U, was used for the between-grade test.

Finally, to further provide a description of a written-narrative register, the linguistic units marked Literary Words and Phrases and Literary Word Order were pulled out of the transcripts and categorized.

Results

Kindergarten Results

The kindergartners differentiated significantly between their oral- and written-narrative registers in the predicted direction with 9 of the 15 features, as noted in Table 1. The following lexical and syntactic features were used with greater frequencies in the written-narrative registers than in the oral: (a) participles; (b) attributive adjectives; (c) -ly adverbs; (d) literary words and phrases; (e) literary word order; (f) direct quotes; (g) sound effects; and (h) formulaic openings. Also, exophoric references occurred with less frequency in the written-narrative registers than in the oral.

Insert Table 1 About Here

The within-subject test of the difference in variety of verbs used in the oral and written narratives by kindergartners was also significant. Results showed a significantly greater variety of verbs, as measured by type/token ratios, in the written narratives than in the oral. Table 2 shows the results of this comparison.

Insert Table 2 About Here

The kindergarters' schema for written-narrative register can be seen in Figure 1 which portrays the lexical and syntactic expectations held by well-read-to kindergartners of written-narrative as they differed from oral-narrative expectations.

Insert Figure 1 About Here

Second Grade Results

The second graders differentiated between their oral and written narrative registers in the predicted directions with 10 of the 15 features, as noted in Table 3. The following features were used with greater frequencies in the written-narrative registers by the second graders: (a) participles; (b) attributive adjectives; (c) conjoined phrases; (d) complement clauses; (e)-ly adverbs; (f) literary words and phrases; (g) literary word order; (h) direct quotes; and (i) formulaic opening. Also, exophoric references were used with less frequency in the written- than in the oral-narrative registers.

Insert Table 3 About Here

The within-subject test for variety of verbs used in the two registers was also highly significant for the second grade sample. The second graders used a greater variety of verbs, as measured by type/token ratios, in their written-register narratives as compared to their oral narratives. Table 4 shows the results of this comparison.

Insert Table 4 About Here

Figure 2 portrays the lexical and syntactic expectations of written narrative held by well-read-to second graders reading at least on grade level in relationship to their expectations of oral narrative.

Insert Figure 2 About Here

Between-Grade Tests

There were no findings of significant differences between the kindergartners and the second graders on any of the features analysed, including the post hoc test on variety of verbs.

Types of Literary Lexical and Syntactic Usages

Literary Words and Phrases and Literary Word Orders were determined by the accepted linguistic procedure of native-user judgment. If a particular word, phrase, or word order sounded like it would be more likely found in writing than in oral conversation to a native language user, it was classified as "literary."

Literary Words and Phrases. Literary words and phrases are those typically used in writing and which sound out of place in speaking (Chafe, 1982). Formulaic openings and endings typically used in written narratives were not counted as instances of this feature.

An examination of the language identified as literary in the written-narrative registers of the children revealed the following categories of lexical usages: (a) vocabulary (K = 41%;

2 = 26%); (b) stocklike phrases (K = 9%; 2 = 14%); (c) avoidance of contractions (K = 0%; 2 = 7%); (d) patterned language (K = 1%; 2 = 1%). Figure 3 portrays the distribution of types involved in the children's use of Literary Words and Phrases by grade.

Insert Figure 3 About Here

By far, the majority of the items identified as "literary" fall into the vocabulary category. In these cases, the children used literary-sounding words in place of other, more common, oral-sounding words. For example, one of the children "read" the following:

... at the entrance .. of the little castle (K, female)

The use of the term entrance rather than door or opening makes this phrase sound more literary. A word could not be classified as 'literary' unless the raters could think of another more common word which could have been used in its place.

Table 5 displays the breakdown of the vocabulary component of the Literary Words and Phrases with examples.

Insert Table 5 About Here

Stock-like phrases make up the next largest category of types of Literary Words and Phrases. These are phrases which are recognized as almost stereotypical of storybooks. Excluded from this category are the most obvious stocklike phrases, the

formulaic openings and endings: Once upon a time and The End. Therefore, the stocklike phrases, which make up 25 percent of the Literary Words and Phrases, represent sentence-level choices not predominated by considerations of narrative macrostructure. The exclusion of formulaic openings and endings reflects the focus of this study which is on sentence-level knowledge of written-narrative, not on knowledge of written-narrative macrostructure which was in fact given to the children via the pictures in the wordless book. Examples of the stock-like phrases employed by the children in their written-register narratives:

.... a little castle ... in the distance. (2, female)

..... and there ..... from a long distance, (K, female)

.. there lived a ... quee:n and a ... king. (2, male)

.... and they .. took the road, (took to the road) (K, male)

A smaller proportion of the Literary Words and Phrases resulted from the apparent attempt to avoid contractions, a common artifice of certain types of written, as opposed to oral, language. This occurred only in the second-grade sample:

.... they did not notice (2, female)

.. they still did not see him. (2, male)

Finally, there were two cases (one in each grade-level sample) of the use of patterned language -- language which seems consciously contrived to create an effect:

..... he ... looked ... the other way.

..... she screamed ..... the other way. (2, female)

... eyes in the darkness,

... eyes in the coop. (K, female)

Literary Word Order. The syntactic component of literary style is Literary Word Order, defined as syntax or word order which is more typically used in writing than in oral language (Chafe, 1982).

The literary word orders employed by the children fell into six categories, with the following distribution of use: (a) preposed adverbials (K = 42%; 2 = 9%); (b) dialogue carrier following dialogue (K = 9%; 2 = 9%); (c) subject/verb inversion (K = 7%; 2 = 9%); (d) extension for elaboration/emphasis (K = 9%; 2 = 0%); (e) inserted adverbials (K = 2%; 2 = 0%); (f) subject/complement inversion (K = 2%; 2 = 0%). Figure 4 displays the distribution of these six types of literary word order.

Insert Figure 4 About Here

The type of literary word order most commonly employed by these children consisted of an adverbial preceding the subject, resulting in a left-branching clause. The placement of single adverbs or adverbial phrases in this manner constituted 70 percent of the instances of this category. For example:

.... behind them were dark, dark eyes. (K, female)

..... down the road they went, (2, male)

The remaining 30 percent of the preposed adverbials were achieved by the placement of entire adverbial clauses before the subjects of clauses. For example:

..... as he cree:ped out of the bushes, ... he thought what to do. (K, male)

..... as the two men rowed, ... the dripping lady was in between. (K, female)

The next most commonly employed type of literary word order involved the placement of the dialogue carrier following the dialogue rather than preceding, as is done in oral situations. For example:

.... "ooo" Noscza said, (K, female)

.. "There's something green," .. said the queen. (2, female)

Inversions of subject and verb often result in literary sounding language (Green, 1982), and this syntactic manipulation was employed by several children in the study. These inversions can be seen in the following examples:

.... behind them were dark, dark eyes. (K, female)

.. the dragon breathes .. fire," ... said the prince (2, male)

The extension of clauses for effect and for semantic elaboration was another manner in which the children achieved literary word orderings. For example,

..... they went .. on a trip. ..... a dangerous trip. (K, female)

bats ... is what they were, bats, ... spooky /baby/ bats. (K, female)

Intonation was used to determine that these structures were in fact intended as extensions and not as repairs.

The insertion of an adverbial between the subject and verb was employed by one of the children to achieve a literary syntactic style:

..... he slowly and quietly followed them. (K, male)

Finally, one child inverted the complement and the subject within a clause, resulting in literary-sounding word order:

bats .. is what they were, (K, female)

Discussion

The purposes of this study were (a) to test the claim that well-read-to children acquire knowledge of the register of written narrative before they encounter formal literacy instruction; (b) to discern growth in this knowledge over time and experience; and (c) to describe the lexical and syntactic expectations held by well-read-to children before and during learning to read.

The claim that young children who have been read to possess lexical and syntactic knowledge specific to written narrative before beginning formal literacy instruction was confirmed by the results of this study. The previous observations that well-read-to young children learn a "book language" is now confirmed by measurable evidence.

Further, the within-subject, oral/written comparison built into this study sheds some light on questions remaining from earlier research (Chomsky, 1972; Leu, 1981) regarding the source of well-read-to children's advanced syntactic development. The

possibility is always raised that parents who read to their children may also speak to them in more elaborated forms, both syntactically and semantically. Thus the appearance of written-type structures and vocabulary in the children's oral language may merely reflect the linguistic level of the home as a whole. If this were so, we would not expect to find the children differentiating between their oral registers and their written registers along those syntactic and lexical dimensions responsible for linguistic elaboration. However, the children in this study did differentiate between the two registers, suggesting that they have learned separate registers in different social contexts.

The hypothesis that the expectations of written narrative held by second graders will reflect the effects of learning to read was not supported by the analysis. Several explanations can be suggested for this: (a) a loss of statistical power due to the effects of the nature of rank tests and of the extremely platykurtic nature of the data; (b) a possible ceiling effect relating to the stimulus (picture book); and/or (c) an increased self-consciousness to the written-narrative task by the second graders who may have felt too old to be pretending to read to a doll. However, my personal impressions during the data gathering do not support this explanation as I saw no evident discomfort with the second graders when confronted with the task. Finally, it is also possible that the second graders did not possess significantly more differentiated expectations of written-

narrative language. Because of the finding of 'no difference' between the two grade levels, the following description of the written-narrative register held by well-read-to children is based on the results from both grades, with the results from the second graders differentiated from the kindergartners as noted.

Written-Narrative Register

It is now possible to begin to describe with some level of specificity the lexical and syntactic knowledge of written-narrative language held by well-read-to children. The features with which the children in this study differentiated between their oral and written-narrative registers suggest that children who have been read to expect the language in storybooks to be (a) integrative, (b) involving, and (c) literary, all characteristics of written narrative, as compared to oral, found by Chafe (1982), Rader (1982), and Tannen (1982) for adults. Further, well-read-to children expect this written-narrative language to be decontextualized from a shared physical context and recontextualized into an "in-text world," a finding suggested by Sulzby's (1983) study on favorite storybook rereadings.

Integration. When employing a written-narrative register, the kindergarten and second-grade children used language which was more syntactically integrated than in their oral narratives. Integration refers to the packing of more information into an intonation unit than the rapid pace of oral language would normally allow (Chafe, (1982). According to Chafe, a typical intonation unit consists of a single clause containing a verb or

predicative adjective and the noun phrase directly associated with that element. For example,

I'm cooking dinner.

The potatoes are mushy.

Sometimes, Chafe adds, a fragmented intonation unit consists only of a noun phrase or prepositional phrase. Integrated language, on the other hand, uses various devices to incorporate additional elements into the intonation unit (see Review of Related Research).

The children in this study achieved increased integration in their written-narrative registers through the greater employment of:

(a) participles

.... the dripping lady was in between. (K, female)

(b) attributive adjectives

... they .. go to dry land. (K, male)

and, additionally for the second graders,

(c) complement clauses

.... and she .... put her hands up.

..... thinking that it was going to shoot. (2, female)

(d) conjoined phrases

..... they saw a frog, .. and said to him ... (2, female)

Chafe (1982) suggests that written language is more integrated than oral because the writer has more time to integrate a succession of ideas into a single linguistic whole. The transitory, fleeting nature of speech makes linguistic

integration much more difficult due to memory constraints (Snyder & Pawley, 1976).

The research task for this study called for novel oral encoding of narrative language for both the oral and written tasks. Yet, the children still produced more integrated language in their written registers, giving evidence of their implicit awareness of this aspect of written narrative.

Involvement. Tannen (1982) and Rader (1982) point out that written narrative includes features which heighten involvement between the author and the reader as opposed to written exposition which fosters detachment (Chafe, 1982). The children in this study demonstrated their knowledge of this aspect of written narrative by using the following features in their written-narrative registers:

(a) direct quotes

"ohhh."

..."we're locked in here," (K, female)

(b) sound effects

... ka-splash.

the stranger .. fell overboard (2, male)

(c) -ly adverbs

..... he slowly and quietly followed them (K, female)

(d) varied verbs

they started down ... to the mountains

..... the mean mouse followed them. (2, male)

... the bats came ... s-..splashing .. out. (K, male)

The effect of the use of the above features is to heighten the involvement between the writer (in this case the child pretending to read) and the reader through increasing the imagery in the language. By "hearing" someone actually speak via direct quotes, the event becomes sharper, more real. Similarly, sound effects bring the narrative closer, making it more concrete.

One is reminded of Rader's (1982) claim that the novelist's job is to create an in-text world through language which constrains the imaging of the reader to the "right image." Direct quotes and sound effects certainly do this. The -ly adverbs and varied verbs seem to contribute even more directly to this end. In the example (c) above, the use of the verb followed provides explicit information on the nature of the "evil rat's" movements. The addition of the -ly adverbs slowly and quietly further constrains and sharpens the image. Since the nature of narrative lies in the relation of events, this could explain (a) why the verbs -- which convey the events -- are so explicit and varied, and (b) why the -ly adverbs, which both constrain the imaging of and elaborate on the action being related, are such apparent markers of written narrative. Certainly, the significantly increased use of these features from their oral to their written-register narratives indicates that well-read-to children, even before they learn to read and write, understand on some level this interplay between the involving nature of written narrative and the linguistic features employed to accomplish it.

Literary Style. The results of this study indicate that

well-read-to children have an implicit awareness of a particular style of language employed in written stories. They seem to know that certain types of words and phrases and word orderings are to be found in storybooks. Partly, these lexical and syntactic choices serve to increase involvement and imagery, and partly they act as markers of a particular register. The children's increased, almost exclusive, use of (a) literary words and phrases, (b) literary word orderings, and (c) formulaic openings in their written-narrative registers clearly demonstrates their knowledge of this literary style.

It is interesting to speculate on the avoidance of contractions by some second graders. Although this is considered a marker of written, as compared to oral, language, it is not as common in written narrative as it is in written exposition, with one exception. Many basal readers avoid contractions ostensibly because they are more difficult to read because (a) contractions result in longer words, and (b) they involve a form of linguistic transformation. However, the avoidance of contractions has been criticized (Shuy, 1981) as contributing to language which is stilted and "unnatural."

The results of the present study permit us to examine this issue from a child's viewpoint. The kindergarten evidence suggests that the critics may be correct in labeling this language "unnatural." There were no cases in which a kindergarten child used the full form of a verb in their written narratives when a contraction would naturally fit. These

children had not yet been exposed to basal readers. The second graders, on the other hand, did substitute full-form verbs in places where a contraction could naturally have been used. This resulted in language which stood out as written-sounding and thus scored as 'literary.' These second graders, having been exposed to basal readers for two years, seem to have incorporated this device of avoiding contractions into their notion of appropriate book language. However, this evidence comes from a descriptive breakdown of the category Literary Words and Phrases, and the causal implications need to be tested in future, controlled studies.

Decontextualization. The fact that children in both grades used significantly fewer exophoric/deictic references in their written-narrative registers than in their oral is an indicator that these children are implicity aware of the essentially decontextualized nature of written language. A discussion of the type of language called for by the research task is needed to elaborate on this conclusion.

Essentially, by asking for a recounting of a birthday party (or other significant event) for the oral-narrative sample and a pretend reading using "book language" for the written-register sample, the researcher was requesting language removed from the physical context for both samples. The children were asked to tell about their birthday parties in such a way as to enable the researcher to "picture it in (her) head." Obviously, the event was in the past, not the immediate present, so that deictic and

exophoric references would have been inappropriate. The clear-cut cases of exophoric reference centered on two areas: (a) using items in the physical present to clarify what has just been said about the past:

... this is one of my new shirts (K, male)

and (b) referring to what is presently in the consciousness of the speaker and soon to be said:

now from this is .. from a different per:son, (2, female)

Additionally, the following use of the indefinite deictic this also appeared in the oral narratives:

.... and there was this sign .. up by the kitchen wall, (K, female)

Here, this acts both as an article (more appropriate for written language) and as a pointer (more appropriate for oral language). As such, it can be viewed as a transitional exphoric referent. One can speculate that the effect of using this, which in its pure form functions as a referent to something in the physical present, in an oral narrative (by definition about a past event), is to create a type of shared context, perhaps because a shared physical context is appropriate to oral interactive language. Certainly, the indefinite deictic is deemed inappropriate to formal written language.

Turning to the written-register narratives, one finds few uses of exophoric referents, either in the clear-cut or transitional form. This is particularly striking when you consider that, in a sense, a physical context was provided via

the pictures which filled each page of the storybook. Yet, children referred exophorically to the pictures only a few times. One can speculate that the clarity of the research task--"pretend to read a story and make it sound like a book story"--helped these children to access and stay with the written-narrative register, which they had heard many times through being read to, and which precludes exophoric reference.

Issues and Implications for Future Research

Production/Recognition. This study examined beginning readers' expectations of written-narrative language through language production tasks. However, memory research (Klatzky, 1980) documents that recall (or reproduction) tasks are inherently more difficult than recognition tasks and underestimate the contents of memory. Ideally, one would want to use recognition tasks to tap children's linguistic expectations of written narrative, especially since it is recognition which is involved in the reading process. However, recognition tasks calling for fine-line judgments are extremely difficult for young children. Perhaps future technological advances will allow for more complete memory research in very young subjects.

Limitation/Causation. The results of this study are limited to children who have been read to extensively during their preschool years and cannot be taken as evidence for a causal relationship between being read to and possession of lexical and syntactic expectations specific to written narrative. A logical next-step is a well-designed study investigating such a causal

relationship.

Narrative/Exposition. The results of this study are also limited to children's expectations of written narrative, specifically storybook written narrative. A future related study should look at expectations of expository writing. This would contribute to our understanding of children's reported difficulties with the expository language of content-area textbooks.

Oral Personal/ Written Fictional Narrative. It is acknowledged that the two types of language compared in this study -- personal narrative and fictional narrative -- are not absolutely equivalent, differing only along the oral/written dimension. They also differ as to function and pragmatic conventions which may explain the unexpected finding of a greater frequency of relative clause use in the oral than in the written narratives. The child's task for the oral narrative was to tell about an event known to him/her and not to the listener. This involved a certain amount of explaining and filling in of background knowledge by the speaker (child) for the listener, often through relative clauses. For example,

..... and Emil ... who lives down the street (2, male)

The children did not perceive the need to provide this type of background information for the characters or objects in the written-register narratives. Future studies of children's language could look at their understandings of the relationships which exist between pragmatic requirements and linguistic devices

serving to meet those requirements.

Oral Language/Registers. This study succeeds in demonstrating that all language which is oral is not necessarily qualitatively the same. This insight helps to clarify the issue of oral language as a base for written language competence. Loban's (1967) finding of a positive correlation between oral language development and reading ability marked the beginning of a subscription by researchers and practitioners to the notion that oral language competence is a necessary base for success in reading and writing. Others, however, have pointed out that many children who appear to have a highly developed and effective oral language do not succeed in learning to read and write. The problem seems to partially lie in the meaning ascribed to the term "oral language" which is usually used in a global manner to refer to all language which is oral and not written down.

Unfortunately, this use of the term ignores the insights provided by sociolinguists into the effects of social context on language use. "Oral language" is in fact composed of several different language registers. Some past research tasks, because of their wordings, may have elicited what can be termed written-language registers , possession of which may be the operative factor in success at learning to read. For example, often researchers elicit what they call "oral language" with tasks which ask the children to "tell" about a story or "make up" a story using a series of pictures as a stimulus (Loban, 1967; Leu, 1981). Or they may ask the children to tell about an event in

preparation for writing about it, putting the oral task in the context of a written one (Cox & Sulzby, 1984). It is highly likely that the term "story" is associated with books, thus written language, in the minds of today's children. Instructions to "tell" or "make up" a story may elicit language which is more written in nature, even though it is expressed orally. Research which attempts to differentiate written registers from oral registers in the language of children will contribute to a more clearly defined picture of the relationship between children's language competence and success at learning to read and write. With this end in mind, future research should note the effects of carefully specifying task requirements and contexts for language production.

Possession/Acquisition. This study clearly establishes that children who are read to do possess identifiable expectations of written-narrative language. More information is needed on how these expectations are acquired, critical periods for acquisition, the role of learning to read and write in this acquisition, and the role of individual differences.

In summary, this study establishes through innovative tasks that young children who have been read to have abstracted certain sentence-level lexical and syntactic expectations of written narrative which they carry with them when they enter school and begin formal literacy instruction. Thus, the terms "book language" and "talk like a book" can now be specified linguistically and cognitively, information which sheds

considerable light on the learning-to-read process for children who have had considerable exposure to written narrative during their preinstruction years.

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Table 1

Results of Matched-Pair Wilcoxin Test on 15 Features for Differentiation of Oral and Written Narratives by Kindergartners.

	Mean (% of Idea Units)			
Feature	Oral	Written	Z	1-tailed p
Participles	.70	2.45	2.47	.01
Attributive Adjectives	4.60	10.95	3.38	.001
Conjoined Phrases	8.30	8.75	.37	.36
Series	1.40	1.90	.76	.22
Sequence of Prepositional Phrases	1.85	1.55	.06	.48
Complement Clauses	.45	.55	.21	.58
Relative Clauses	4.95	1.70	-2.66	.004*
Adverbial Clauses	4.05	3.60	.02	.51
-ly Adverbs	.10	2.05	1.98	.02
Literary Words & Phrases	.20	4.95	3.48	.001
Literary Word Order	.40	2.25	2.04	.02
Direct Quotes	1.50	9.70	2.27	.01
Sound Effects	.05	.85	2.20	.01
Formulaic Opening	.00	1.90	3.52	.0002
Exophoric Reference	2.95	1.05	2.13	.02*

*Oral greater than written

Table 2

Results of Matched-Pair Wilcoxin Test on Variety of Verbs Used in the Oral and Written Narratives by Kindergartners

	Narrative			
	Oral	Written	Z	2-tailed p
Mean Type/Token Ratio as %	.42	.53	3.47	.001

Table 3

Results of Matched-Pair Wilcoxin Test on 15 Features for Differentiation of Oral and Written Narratives by Second Graders

	Mean (% of Idea Units)			
Feature	Oral	Written	Z	1-tailed p
Participles	1.55	4.10	2.25	.01
Attributive Adjectives	4.50	10.15	2.33	.01
Conjoined Phrases	5.65	9.15	2.57	.005
Series	1.55	.80	1.16	.12
Sequences of Prepositional Phrases	2.25	2.80	.96	.17
Complement Clauses	.55	1.65	2.00	.02
Relative Clauses	4.15	1.95	2.26	.01*
Adverbial Clauses	5.20	3.50	1.57	.06
-ly Adverbs	.00	.60	1.96	.025
Literary Words & Phrases	.30	4.90	3.39	.0004
Literary Word Order	.20	.80	1.83	.03
Direct Quotes	.50	5.75	2.31	.01
Sound Effects	.30	.30	.00	1.0
Formulaic Opening	.00	1.35	3.18	.001
Exophoric Reference	3.60	1.40	1.81	.03*

*Oral greater than written

Table 4

Results of Matched-Pair Wilcoxin Test on Variety of Verbs Used in the Oral and Written Narratives by Second Graders

	Narrative			
	Oral	Written	*Z*	2-tailed *p*
Mean Type/ Token as %	.43	.54	3.27	.001

Table 5

Distribution of Vocabulary Choices for Literary Words and Phrases by Kindergartners and Second Graders.

Type	% of Vocabulary Category (N = 57)		Example
	K	2	
Noun	7%	0%	...and the villain came in
Adjective	7%	16%	..and he got angry at them
Adverb	11%	12%	..took them .. ashore
Verb	35%	14%	...the prince had to battle the dragon,
Preposition	2%	0%	..he helped ....them onto a lilypad,

Figure 1. Linguistic indicators of a differentiation between oral and written narrative registers by kindergartners

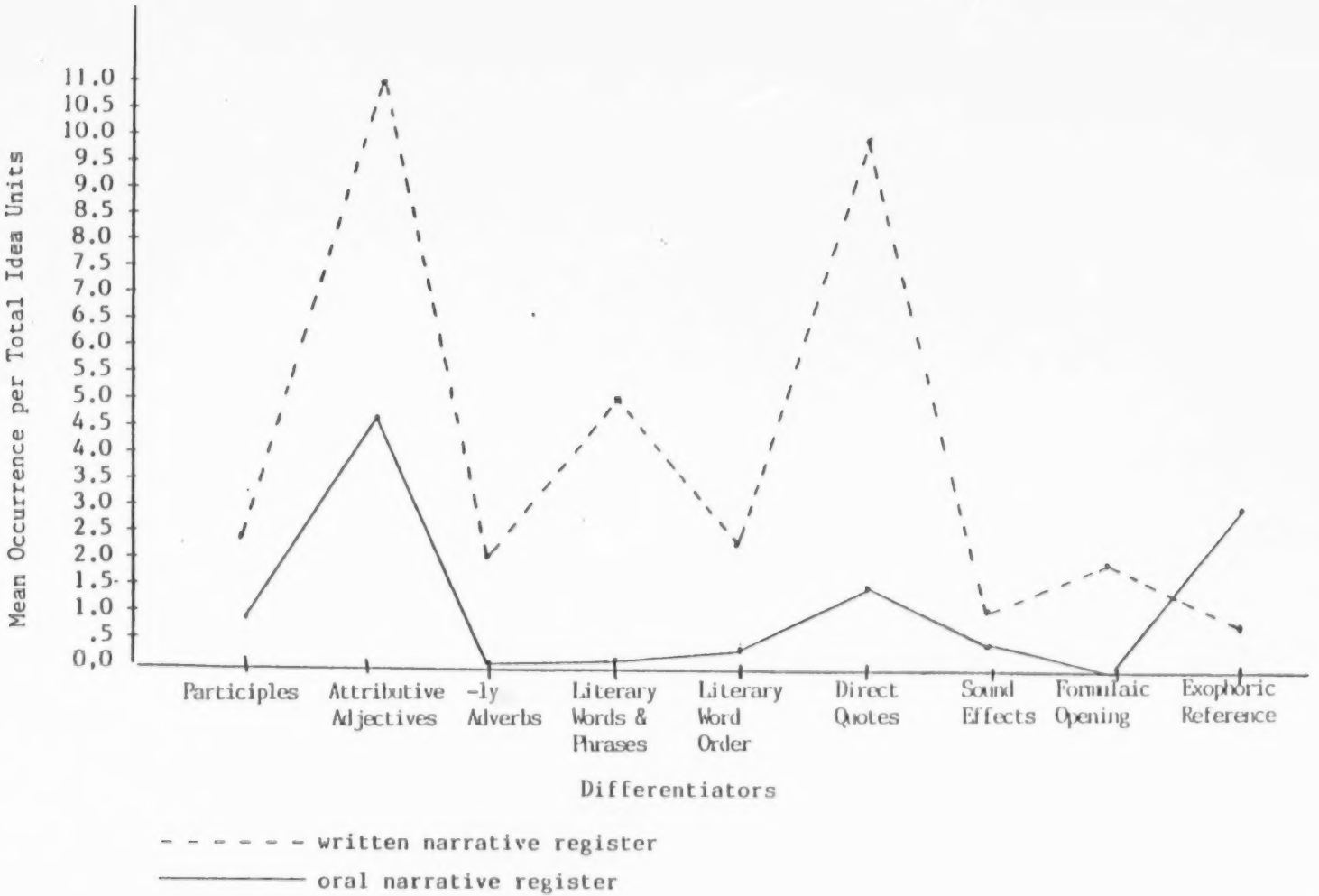

Figure 2. Linguistic indicators of a differentiation between oral and written narrative registers by second graders.

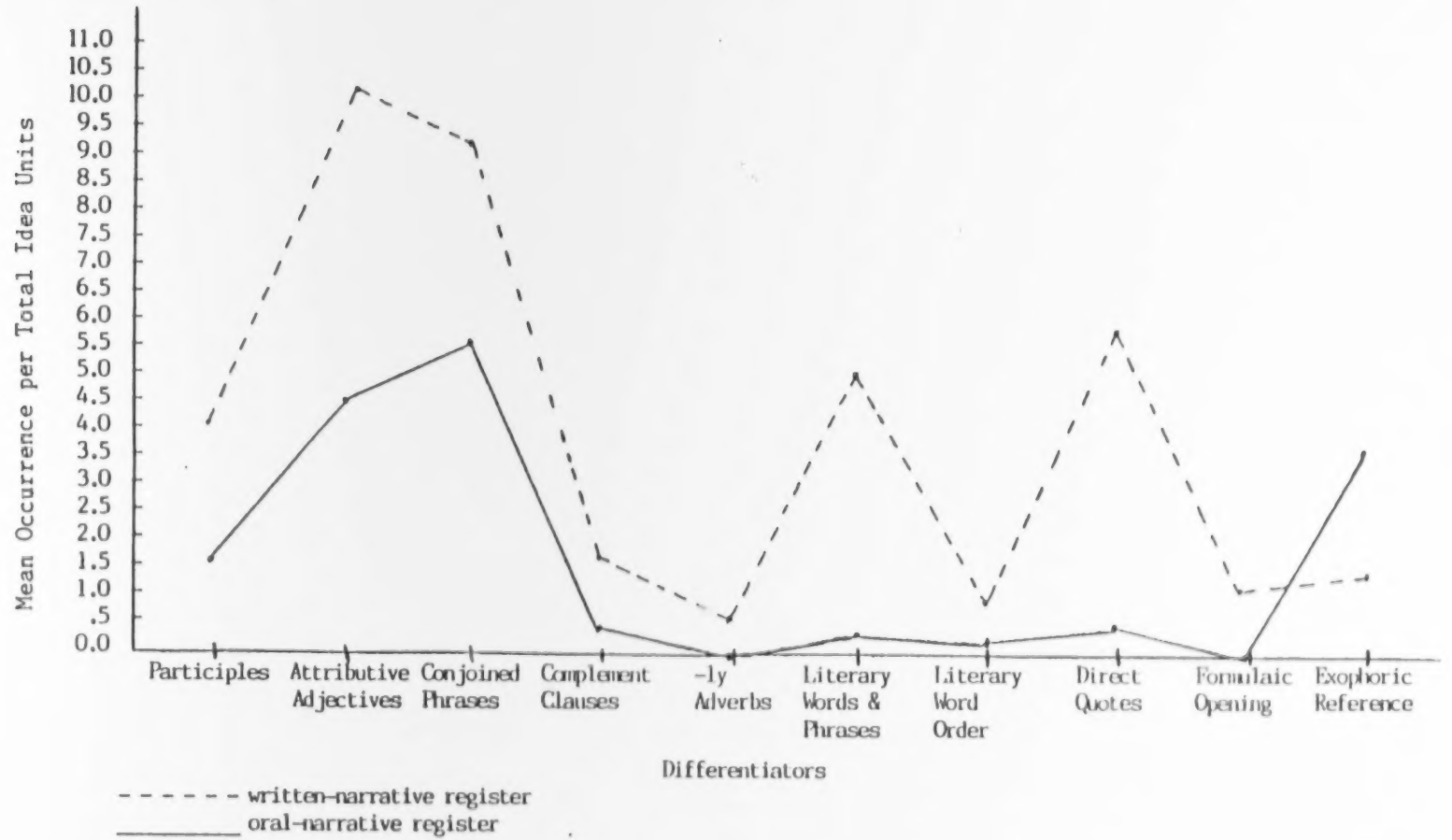

Figure 3. Distribution of Types of Literary Word Orders Used by Kindergartners and Second Graders in Their Written-Register Narratives.

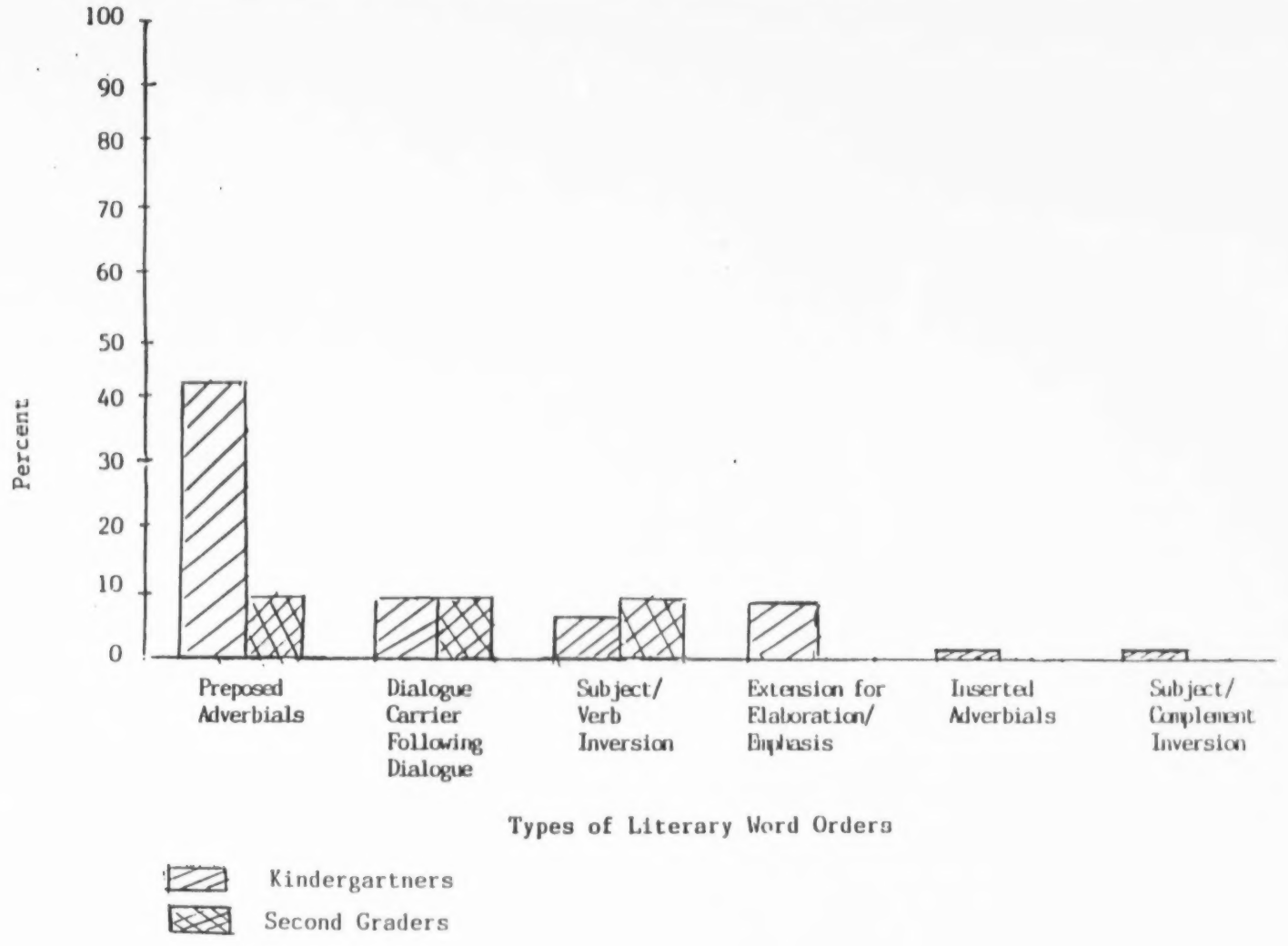

Figure 4. Distribution of Types of Literary Words and Phrases Used by Kindergartners and Second Graders in Their Written-Register Narratives.